A DECLARATION OF THE SENSE OF THE Archbiſhops and Biſhops; now in and about *London*, upon the Occaſion of their Attendance in PARLIAMENT; Concerning the Irregular and Scandalous *Proceedings* of certain *Clergy-Men* at the Execution of Sir *JOHN FREIND* and Sir *WILLIAM PARKINS*

John Williams

Printed for John Everingham *at the Star in* Ludgate-ſtreet, 1696.

A

DECLARATION

OF THE

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OF THE

Archbiſhops *and* Biſhops, *&c.*

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A DECLARATION OF THE Senſe of the Archbiſhops, and Biſhops,

Now in and about *London*, upon the Occaſion of their Attendance in Parliament,

Concerning the Irregular and Scandalous Proceedings of certain Clergie-men, at the Execution of Sir JOHN FREIND *and Sir* WILLIAM PARKINS.

WE the Archbiſhops and Biſhops, now in and about *London* upon occaſion of our Attendance in *Parliament*, having ſeen a

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Printed Paper, Entituled, *A true Copy of the Papers delivered by Sir* John Freind *and Sir* William Parkins *to the Sheriffs of* London *and* Middleſex, *at* Tyburn *the place of Execution*, April 3. 1696. And being alſo certainly informed of the moſt irregular behaviour of Mr. *Cook*, Mr. *Collier*, and Mr. *Snatt*, in pretending to *Abſolve* the ſaid Criminals at their Execution, to the great ſcandal of the Church, and of our holy Religion, have therefore thought our ſelves obliged to Declare our Senſe of the ſame, as here followeth.

1. As to the Paper before mentioned, we cannot but obſerve, that

that in that part to which Sir *John Freind* is Entituled, among many other things there delivered as his private Opinion, (for which we muſt leave him to God) there are mingled ſome things concerning the Church of *England*, to the great diſhonour and reproach of it. That venerable Name is, by the Author of that Paper, appropriated to that part of our Church which hath ſeparated it ſelf from the Body; and more particularly, to a Faction of them who are ſo furiouſly bent upon the reſtoring of the late King, that they ſeem not to regard by what means it is to be effected. We have a ſad inſtance of it in this

very

very Perſon, who (as was depoſed at his Tryal) was privy to the horrid Deſign of **Aſſaſſination**, and yet neither diſcovered it, nor ſhewed any diſlike of it, but as *he was afraid it might ruine King* James *and his* * *Affairs*; and was ready alſo, together with others of the ſame *Chriſtian Principle* (as the Author of his Paper is bold to call it,) to Act in Conjunction with an Army of *French* Papiſts, for the Ruine of their Country, and the Extirpation of that Religion which they themſelves do profeſs.

* Tryal p. 17.

2. As for Sir *William Parkins*, who alſo profeſſed to dy in the Com-

Communion of the Church of *England*, We cannot think he meant any thing elſeby it, than that he adhered to the ſame violent Faction: being aſſured (as we are by very good Information,) that both he and *Sir John Freind* had withdrawn themſelves from our Publick Aſſemblies ſome time before their death. Which makes us the leſs wonder to find in both their Papers ſo light, and even favourable, a mention of that moſt Inhumane Deſign of Aſſaſſinating his Sacred Majeſty: and eſpecially in that of *Sir William Parkins*, who, though he was publickly convicted of his having engaged

ſo many in that horrible Sin, yet after all could think to clear himſelf of it with this wretched excuſe: *'Tis true, I was privy to the Deſign upon the Prince, but was not to Act in it.* Bleſſed be God, there never was any of our Church, that in any change of times could have this laid to his charge, that he was ſo much as *privy* to a Deſign of Aſſaſſination.

Laſtly, For thoſe Clergymen that took upon them to abſolve theſe Criminals at the place of Execution, by laying, all three together, their hands upon their heads, and publickly pronouncing

cing a Form of Abſolution; as their manner of doing this was extremely inſolent, and without Precedent, either in our Church, or any other that we know of, ſo the thing it ſelf was altogether irregular.

The Rubrick in our Office of the Viſitation of the ſick, from whence they took the words they then uſed, and upon which, if upon any thing in our Liturgy, they muſt ground this their proceeding, gave them no Authority nor no Pretence for the abſolving theſe Perſons; nay, as they managed the affair, they acted in this

this Abſolution far otherwiſe than is there directed.

That Rubrick is concerning ſick Perſons, and it is there required, *Firſt*, That *the ſick perſon ſhall be moved to make a ſpecial confeſſion of his Sins, if he feel his conſcience troubled with any weighty matter, and then, after ſuch confeſſion, the Prieſt ſhall abſolve him, if he humbly and heartily deſire it.* But here they abſolved, and that publickly, Perſons condemned by Law for Execrable Crimes, without ſo much as once *moving* them at that time to make a *ſpecial confeſſion of their ſins*, at leaſt for thoſe Sins for which they were condemned. And on the other

other ſide, here were perſons Abſolved that did not humbly deſire Abſolution, as *feeling* any ſuch *weighty Matter* to *trouble* their *Conſcience*; but on the contrary, in Sir *John Freind*'s Paper it is declared that he had a great deal of *ſatisfaction in ſuffering* for that cauſe, which he firmly believed to be *the Cauſe of God, and True Religion.*

If theſe Miniſters knew not the State of theſe Mens Souls before they gave them Abſolution, as it is manifeſt two of them, Mr. *Snatt* and Mr. *Cook* did not, as to Sir *William Parkins*, (they

having ſince declared that they had not ſpoke with *Sir William* till they were at the place of Execution,) how could they, without manifeſt Tranſgreſſion of the Churches Order, as well as the prophane abuſe of the Power *Chriſt* hath left with his Miniſters, abſolve them from all their Sins?

If they were acquainted with theſe Mens Sentiments declared in their Papers, then they muſt look upon them, either as hardened *Impenitents*, or as *Martyrs*.

We

We are ſo charitable to believe that they would not abſolve them under the former Notion; for that had been, in effect, ſealing them to Damnation: But if they held theſe men to be *Martyrs*, then their abſolving them in that manner was a Juſtification of thoſe grievous Crimes for which theſe men ſuffered, and an open affront to the Laws both of Church and State.

Upon the Conſideration of theſe Things, and for the doing of Right to our Church,

which may otherwiſe ſuffer, among ſuch as are ſtrangers to our Conſtitution, by the evil Principles and Practices, both of the aforeſaid Criminals, and the Three Clergy-men that aſſiſted them, who all pretended to be *M*embers of the Church of *England*: We do declare, That we diſown and deteſt all ſuch Principles and Practices; looking upon them as highly *S*chiſmatical and *S*editious; dangerous both to the Church and *S*tate, and contrary to the True Doctrine and *S*pirit of the Chriſtian Religion. And we alſo take this occaſion to warn and exhort

hort all the People committed to our Charge, to beware of ſuch Seducers, and to avoid them, leſt (as the Apoſtle *St. Peter* ſpeaks) *they be led away with the error of the Wicked*, and fall from their ſtedfaſt Adherence to the Principles of the True Church of *England*, as it was eſtabliſhed at the bleſſed Reformation of Religion, and as by Gods eſpecial Providence it continues to this day. *April* 10th. 1696.

Tho. Cantuar.
Jo. Ebor.
H. London.
N. Dureſme.
P. Winchester.
W. Cov. and *Lich.*
Tho. Roffen.
Sy. Elienſ.
Gil.

Gil. Hereford.	*Ed. Glouceſter.*
Jo. Norwich.	*Rob. Chicheſter.*
Ric. Peterb.	*E. Aſaph.*

FINIS.